

Indonesia for the tragic earthquake that struck the island of Sumatra on September 30, 2009.

This earthquake took the lives of more than 700 individuals, and many more are injured or remain missing. In addition to the loss of life, the infrastructure of this island was devastated, and this tragedy resulted in the destruction of roughly 80,000 houses, 200 public buildings, 285 schools and 20 miles of road. The Indonesian government has worked rapidly to get relief teams to Sumatra to find survivors, distribute food, and provide medical assistance, as well as assess damages and make preparations to rush in supplies.

Mr. Speaker, my most heartfelt condolences go out to the people of Indonesia and Sumatra for their suffering, and I join them in grieving. I urge my fellow colleagues to support H. Res. 810 for the people of Indonesia and to remember the victims of this terrible earthquake.

SAINT CECILIA'S CATHOLIC
CHURCH 125TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 125th anniversary of St. Cecilia's Catholic Church in Bartelso, Illinois.

In the mid-nineteenth century immigrants of primarily German descent settled in the area. By 1880 there were about 75 Catholic families living in the vicinity, most of whom were members of St. Boniface Church. However, flooding of the Kaskaskia River and Shoal Creek made the roads leading to St. Boniface virtually impassable.

In 1884, St. Cecilia's Catholic Church was built to better accommodate the area's families. Building supplies were hauled from the surrounding area to the construction site by horse-drawn wagons. The project culminated in the beautiful church that is still one of the finest in Southern Illinois. The town of Bartelso flourished with the new attention that St. Cecilia's brought.

I would like to congratulate the members of St. Cecilia's Catholic Church for reaching this milestone and wish them a blessed and joyous celebration as they mark 125 years of service to God and their community.

IN HONOR OF INTERNATIONAL
CREDIT UNION DAY

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance and many achievements of credit unions worldwide in celebration of the 61st annual International Credit Union Credit Day.

The difference credit unions make in the United States by providing affordable and safe financial services to many Americans of moderate means has been significant and widely recognized.

However, the contributions credit unions have made on an international scale are equally notable. Since the mid-1800s, credit

unions have established themselves in communities around the world struggling with social dislocation, political unrest and economic depression as a means to promote economic growth and democratic practices at the local level. Today, more than 54,000 credit unions provide financial services to more than 186 million members in 97 nations.

Credit unions make a difference on a global scale by providing access to affordable financial services for those who otherwise would have been excluded from the financial sector. Such financial services include the provision of small savings and loans, which enable some of the poorest individuals in the world to start their own microenterprises, improve household stability and stimulate growth in their communities. Credit unions are the largest source of these microfinance services in countries as diverse as Colombia, Kenya, Russia, Mexico, Thailand and Rwanda.

Credit unions are also at the forefront of expanding access to finance for people living in rural areas who can't afford the time or money it takes to visit a financial institution. Credit unions are working with the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) to introduce a variety of innovative technology solutions to bank the unbanked in rural areas. In Mexico, credit union officers carry hand-held personal digital assistant (PDA) devices to conduct financial transactions with members in communities located up to 90 minutes from the credit union office. In Kenya, Peru and Mexico, point-of-sale devices enable credit unions to partner with local merchants in rural areas, allowing members to deposit and withdraw money from their credit union accounts. Finally, mobile banking capabilities in Mexico will enable members to check their balances and transfer funds without leaving their homes.

In addition, credit unions throughout the world are filling the agricultural lending gap that has kept the vast majority of small farmers stuck in low-production, low-return cycles. In countries such as Peru, Kenya and Colombia, credit unions are taking an integrated, value-chain approach to financing that includes access to agricultural training and markets for farmers to sell their products. As a result, farmers are not only increasing their incomes and producing more food for their families, they are also playing a role in securing their nations' food supply.

Credit unions have also contributed to post-conflict rebuilding of societies and economies in war-torn countries. WOCCU has been on the ground in Afghanistan since 2003, working with communities at the grassroots level to form the country's first credit unions and rural financial system. Afghan credit unions are known as "Islamic investment and finance co-operatives" in order to comply with Islamic lending practices. They are playing a powerful role in communities, bringing together people from different tribes to work together to finance the individual needs of each other and those of the community through reconstruction projects. In Helmand province, for example, access to credit provides poppy farmers with the opportunity to start a new life by growing alternative crops such as paprika. This will have an impact on the overall security and stability of the region.

As democratically owned and operated not-for-profit financial cooperatives, credit unions also contribute to the democratization of societies. The one-member one-vote principle of

credit unions is often the first vehicle for local expressions of democratic participation. In many countries, credit unions lead economic democratization, a step closer to political democratization by providing economic security and sustainability and exposing lower-income communities to free-market principles and democratic values that will help eradicate terrorism at its roots.

U.S. credit union members, staff and leagues, along with CUNA and the United States government, support the global work of credit unions and WOCCU. Through WOCCU's International Partnerships Program, 25 U.S. credit union leagues are matched with developing credit union movements overseas to encourage the direct transfer of technology, skills and experience among peers across borders.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending the work of credit unions, both domestically and internationally, for providing vital financial services that improve the lives of people demonstrating the greatest need around the world. By providing the world's poor with the most basic financial services, credit unions help expand job opportunities, improve local economies and promote democracy. In short, credit unions offer a sustainable development solution to some of the world's poorest countries, and this is the "credit union difference."

COMMEMORATING THE 90TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE SAINT BENE-
DICT PAROCHIAL SCHOOL IN
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

HON. ERIC CANTOR

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. CANTOR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Saint Benedict Parochial School in Richmond, Virginia.

Saint Benedict Parochial School has been serving the Richmond area since 1919 when it opened on the corner of Grove and Belmont Avenues. Classes were temporarily held in the convent, which was moved just a few years later to make room for the proposed school building. An addition to the school was built in 1949 after an increasing number of students outgrew the existing school.

Today, Saint Benedict Parochial School continues to offer a traditional education in a faith-filled environment to both elementary and middle school students. Along with language arts, mathematics, social studies and science, religion is also taught as one of the core subject areas. In fact, the school motto is *Ut in Omnibus Glorificetur Deus*, or in other words, "So that in all things God may be glorified!"

In addition to concentrating on their education, Saint Benedict students spend countless hours serving the community. Once a month, students prepare and deliver bagged lunches to the homeless. They also collect canned food for the Central Virginia Food Bank, and have worked to raise money for organizations like the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital as well as a school in the greater Richmond area that was facing the possibility of closing.